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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN JASON MACK AND IO/RHS RACHEL LEATHAM

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CS](#)
SUBJECT: COSTA RICA: UN DEMOCRACY FUND PROJECT

REF: STATE 19781

¶1. On March 12, Poloff, Cultural Affairs Officer, and foreign service national met with Maria Eugenia Bujanda of the Omar Dengo Foundation (FOD), the Costa Rican UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF) grantee.

FOD is a non-profit organization dedicated to national development through improvements and innovations in education. Their two-year project, "Democracy Builders: Youth Capacities for Active Citizenship," is funded by a \$300,000 grant from UNDEF. They have five partners in this project: The Ministry of Public Education (MEP), UNDP (which manages the funds), UNDEF, UNICEF, and the Supreme Elections Tribunal.

¶2. As one effort to confront the perceived increase in Costa Rica's political and civic apathy, FOD's project endeavors to develop youth capacities for active and democratic citizenship. It was designed to enrich the civic education curriculum and the student government activities at the high school level with an innovative approach based on experimental learning. The program will complement the FOD program "Active Citizenship and Democracy," now in place at the primary school level.

¶3. The program is still in a pre-implementation phase, as the agreement between FOD and UNDEF was only signed on March 1, 2007. However, five geographically diverse high schools have already been identified as pilot sites for the first year of the program. As now envisioned, once the program is fully developed and fine-tuned within the two-year goal, the MEP will assume continuing responsibility.

¶4. COMMENT: It is not possible to assess the performance of the program at this time since it has not yet been implemented. However, given FOD's experience with educational programs designed to promote active citizenship, experienced partners from the various UN program partners, and the resources and access gained by its partnership with the MEP, there is reason to expect successful management of this program and a realization of stated objectives in the time allotted. End Comment.

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